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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to investigate educational practices at the school district level. Its purpose was to identify school districts in the United States that have discovered ways to ensure that students in all or most of their schools are making significant progress toward meeting high standards, and then to learn from their experiences. Four districts were selected as case studies in Texas, Idaho, and West Virginia, based on standardized student test scores in most schools having increased by 20 to 25 percent. Two large urban districts are included to demonstrate that some progress is being made in the urban context. A central finding is that large gains in test scores require: (1) extensive efforts to align instruction with the test contents; (2) detailed analysis of student responses to the tests or assessments designed to parallel these; and (3) the provision of immediate and appropriate corrective instruction for individual students as indicated by that analysis. It is hoped this report will help equip school district leaders, as well as teachers and principals, with a better understanding of what they would need to do to approach similar improvement processes both systematically and realistically. (Contains 18 references.) (RT)

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